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ABSTRACT

In these memoirs, Richard Henry Pratt (1840-1924) recounts the history he lived through and helped to make in 8 years of frontier army service and as founder of the Carlisle Indian School. In 1867, Captain Pratt arrived at Fort Arbuckle, Indian Territory. The following 8 years culminated in the collapse of the hostile southern Plains tribes. Pratt's assignments as organizer and leader of units of Indian scouts led him to reflect on the condition of minority races in a social and political order that he regarded as otherwise perfect. He concluded that the Constitution guaranteed "fraternity and equal privilege for development" to all, and that this was all the Indian needed to cast off his aboriginal culture and be assimilated into American society. In 1875-78, Pratt served as jailor to 72 conquered Kiowa, Comanche, and Cheyenne leaders imprisoned in Florida. His accomplishments in educating the prisoners helped to convince others that the experiment should be enlarged in a more favorable environment. In its first year (1879) Carlisle enrolled over 200 pupils from 12 tribes. During Pratt's 24-year tenure, the school educated 4,903 Indian children from 77 tribes. The curriculum emphasized both academic and manual instruction. The school's most famous feature, the Carlisle Outing, placed Indian children with white farm families during the summer. So determined and public was Pratt's attack on all who opposed his program that he was relieved of duty in 1904. Carlisle closed in 1918. This book contains 33 photographs, many letters, and an index. (SV)

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